

OWM Strategy

August 2021

Overview

One World Media is a non-profit organisation founded over 30 years ago by a group of journalists who recognised that international reporting at that time was limited and often reinforced stereotypes. They set out to encourage and celebrate more and better quality reporting from the global south.

Since then we have been working to support a growing network of journalists and filmmakers globally. The One World Media Awards continue to be our flagship programme; at the same time we have increasingly focused our activities on supporting new talent and championing journalists, filmmakers and media organisations from the global south.

This Strategic Plan is a summary of what drives our work and the approach that we take as we develop our activities over the next three years. Our primary focus is on supporting the journalists and filmmakers working in the field, day-to-day to bring us important and influential stories from and about low and middle income countries.

We believe we can make a difference by celebrating, connecting and championing their work. Our major activities include: the One World Media Awards, the OWM Fellowship, the Global Short Docs Forum, and a year-round series of international reporting events and workshops.

Why stories matter

Journalism can have a dramatic influence on how we all view the world, particularly when reporting on the global south.

Stories can bring shared ideas, solutions and challenges to light, but they can also reinforce stigma and prejudice. In an increasingly interconnected world, we all need to know what is happening, not only locally but globally. Media can help us to better understand the world around us and connect us. This means it is important to consider which stories reach audiences and who gets to tell those stories.

The UN's Sustainable Development Goals recognise the role that media plays in Goal 16, which includes improving access to information. It emphasises the importance of information for sound decision-making at all levels, from that of senior decision-makers at the national and international levels to the grassroots and individual levels. Many international stories also directly contribute to other SDGs, such as Goal 10 to reduce inequality within and between countries, Goal 3 health and wellbeing and Goal 13 on climate action.

There are a number of challenges that stand in the way of the flow of ideas and stories from reporters to audiences.

Free, independent journalism faces two connected but separate high-level risks: direct threats to press freedom and distrust from the public with the increased spread of fake news.

The World Press Freedom Index indicates that the "global indicator" – a measure of the level of media freedom worldwide – has deteriorated by 12% since this measure was created in 2013. In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted and amplified the many crises that threaten the right to report due to increased government restrictions alongside weakening public trust in the media and financial pressure on newsrooms.

Research from MIT shows that false news travels six times faster than the truth. Whether it's called propaganda, fake news or disinformation, we've seen its widespread use for political, financial or social gain. The current pandemic has made the stakes particularly high with conspiracy theories increasing the risk and false stories reinforcing prejudices and causing direct harm.

Within the media industry barriers remain that impact the ability of diverse ideas and perspectives to thrive.

The Reuters Institute's report Changing Newsrooms 2020 surveyed newsroom leaders around the world and found a lack of diversity in senior positions, both in gender and ethnicity, could be a barrier to change. Decision-makers in media organisations make conscious or unconscious choices of who and what they decide to feature. By increasing diversity we will see stories that better represent and serve the community.

When there is only a predominant narrative we lose the nuance, balance and numerous perspectives that make up the world we live in. The ability to access this information helps us all find understanding, to break down prejudices and change the narrative. Fundamentally, journalists and filmmakers have the power to bring about change.

Strategy

MISSION Stories shape our world. It matters how they're told.

PURPOSE We support filmmakers and journalists globally to tell stories that inform and connect us all.

We believe in:

- Free, independent and impartial journalism
- Plurality of voices in storytelling
- Creativity in storytelling

VALUES

Optimistic. We see the power of positive messaging; by celebrating and championing success we can guide others to tell stories that matter.

Creative. We believe in creativity, whether it is from the talent that we support or the way we adapt and shape our work.

Supportive. We want to be an ally, providing tangible support to a generation of filmmakers and journalists to be able to make their own journey in the industry.

Partners. We want to stimulate cross-cultural connections that bring people together across our global networks.

Effective. We evaluate and evolve our programmes to keep improving our value and impact.

OUR APPROACH

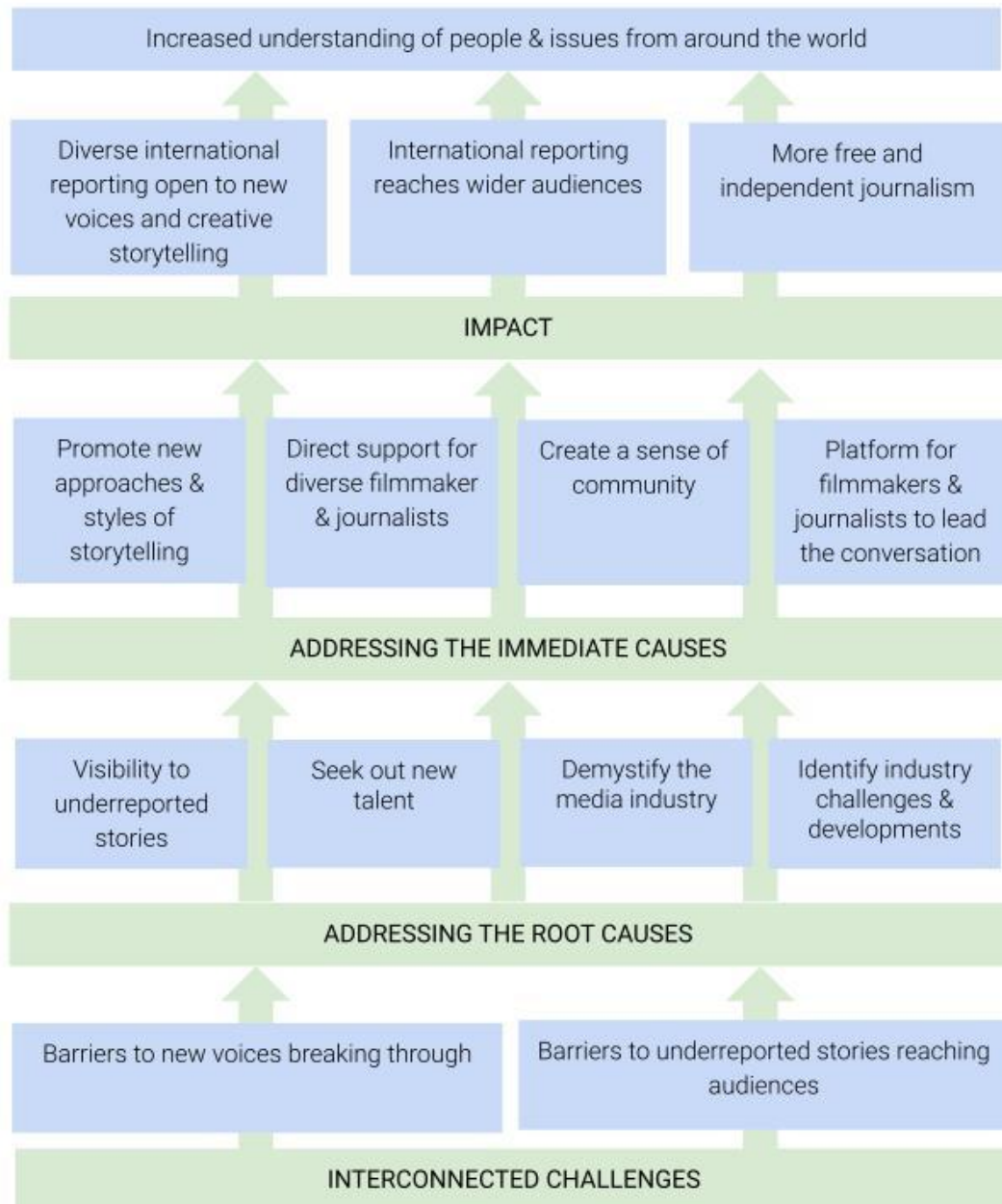
One World Media's activities are based on our understanding of the impact we can have by supporting filmmakers and journalists to tell their stories. This is outlined in an organisational theory of change, which sets out to address two interconnected challenges:

1. the barriers to new voices breaking into the media industry
2. barriers to underreported stories reaching audiences.

We believe that by designing our activities within this framework we will encourage more diverse international reporting that is open to new voices and creative storytelling; allow international stories to reach wider audiences; and support more free and independent journalism. This will in turn increase understanding of people and issues from around the world.

Our activities do not stand in isolation - we consider how we can support filmmakers and journalists throughout their career. We provide stepping stones from our education programmes for new talent, through to achieving nominations for our prestigious Awards.

Theory of change



STRATEGIC PLAN 2021 - 2024

One World Media's activities have evolved over the past two years as we increase our focus on providing more opportunities for new talent in the global south. This was combined with adapting to the pandemic; many of our programmes like our flagship Awards Ceremony, were built on in-person events and had to become engaging online experiences.

In the next three years, One World Media will be focused on these new goals:

- Reshaping our programmes post-pandemic, with some of the new talent programmes continuing solely online and developing hybrid events to balance the benefits of international accessibility online and the connection made when meeting people in person.
- Continuing to expand our international reach, building on our strong connections across Africa and growth in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Giving more recognition in the Awards and Fellowship to solutions journalism as a way of breaking stereotypes and promoting balanced narratives.

As a small non profit organisation, we have been able to meet our ambitious plans because of the dedicated staff and trustees, and committed funding partners. As our reach and activities have expanded we recognise that we need a sustainable growth plan to continue on this path. We therefore will be focusing on funding for sustainable incremental growth, recognising the additional costs of a 'return to normal' and investing in the team to accommodate the expanded new talent programmes.

1. Celebrate underreported stories

We shine a light on the best global media coverage and celebrate high standards across the industry. Providing this recognition gives an endorsement to the journalists and filmmakers and also holds broadcasters and media organisations to a high bar, encouraging them to continue producing this crucial kind of journalism.

Our flagship programme, the One World Media Awards, embodies this approach with 15 Awards across media formats and topics. Every year, hundreds of entries from all over the world are judged by our panels of distinguished media professionals, selected for their wide ranging experience and expertise. The nominees and winners are celebrated at our annual Awards Ceremony and throughout the year via our events and communications.

Our Special Award stands out as the only Award dedicated to the work of a whole organisation. In recent years, it has become a method of providing recognition and ongoing support to organisations in the global south that continue reporting despite repeated threats to media freedom.

"Thank you for recognising our work, because it helps to keep us safe. I think the battles that are occurring in the Philippines are now occurring in many other countries around the world and I think that we have to hold the line." - Maria Ressa, Founder and Chief Executive of Rappler - OWM Special Award Winner 2020

“This is a great honor not just for our organisation but for the people of Myanmar and also for the news media industry of Myanmar.” - Swe Win, Editor-in Chief, Myanmar Now - OWM Special Award Winner 2021

“At a time when there are attempts to crush dissent and freedom of expression, these stories highlight that journalism is very much kicking and alive.” - Athandiwe Saba, Editor, Mail & Guardian - OWM Awards Judge 2021

“This award is not just for one film or one story. It’s an incredible encouragement to a community working hard to bring our stories to the world. The reception our film continues to receive emphasises that African stories told by Africans resonate around the world.” - Sam Soko, filmmaker - OWM Feature Documentary Award Winner 2021

Programme Goals 2021- 2024

- Increase the visibility of filmmakers and journalists reporting from the global south, giving the nominees and winners of the One World Media Awards more opportunities to share their work and ideas beyond the Ceremony.
- Increase the percentage of entries each year that represent our principles, which means stories should break through stereotypes, promote balanced narratives or have a collaborative approach with contributors.

2. Champion new talent

We seek out and support a pipeline of talented, independent, international journalists and filmmakers coming into the industry. We fill a gap in tangible support for emerging journalists and filmmakers that are in the early stages of their career and trying to understand how to navigate the industry.

Our major programmes for new talent are currently the OWM Fellowship and Global Short Docs Forum, which have transformed in recent years to become a dynamic international cohort of emerging journalists and filmmakers. In 2020, the Fellowship expanded to welcome 20 emerging filmmakers and journalists from 17 different countries, with ten places specifically for talent from countries in Africa. The Global Short Docs Forum moved online, providing a month-long intensive storytelling and pitch training for 12 filmmakers, leading up to the final pitch meetings with decision-makers representing digital platforms.

“The mentorship was enriching and the personal attention given to my project helped me delve deeper to think about the complexity of my characters and the narrative journey.” - GSDF 2020 participating filmmaker

“I’ve learnt a lot through this journey. I have increased my confidence in knowing what a good story is, who are compelling characters, and also in my ability to work on all different aspects of the filmmaking process.” - Lydia Matata, OWM Fellow

Programme Goals 2021 - 2024:

- Provide accessible practical training and a supportive environment that elevates emerging talent. We will continue our work with talent across Africa, and seek to replicate this in other regions, particularly Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Provide a foundation for the next steps in filmmakers' and journalists' careers. We want to do more to provide connections to editors, commissioners and ongoing career opportunities.

3. Connect our global community

We create opportunities for conversation on the types of stories being made, who is covering them, and how they are being covered. We build connections between emerging and established players in the international media industry, helping to open doors to the key players and influencers, particularly for underrepresented groups. At the same time we want to build a community of talent that can support one another throughout their careers.

In 2020 the pandemic was a time of uncertainty and we have seen the important supportive role we play for our Fellows and Global Short Docs Forum participants, and the general need for connection across the industry. The importance of providing access to industry decision-makers is most clearly seen at GSDF, where selected filmmakers are given the preparation they need to directly pitch to digital platforms. We have seen several films from the Forum get commissioned and the start of many long-term relationships.

We have launched an ambitious calendar of digital events, workshops and industry roundtables to bring our community together and share ideas, including the first OWM Global Reporting Summit. These events allow us to spotlight OWM priorities - notably media freedom, misinformation, solutions journalism and collaborative journalism - as well as timely debates in the industry.

"The forum reminded me of the importance of feedback within a community of filmmakers. So often, whilst developing projects independently I lacked a support bubble that offered to shape ideas and get me through projects." - GSDF 2020 participant filmmaker

"It's more about future relationships. It's not confined to what you're currently working on, it might have a bearing on how things might follow for months, years to come." - GSDF 2020 participant filmmaker

"I really value being able to come to the Global Short Docs Forum, and I've now got to know that it's a place where I'm going to find talent, I'm going to be able to have a continued conversation with filmmakers who are open to critique, because they're encouraged by the this group of very dynamic mentors and leadership at One World Media." - Rosie Garthwaite, BBC Arabic, GSDF Platform 2020

Programme Goals 2021 - 2024:

- Convene industry leading, meaningful events that build connections in the industry, establishing the Global Reporting Summit as a high-profile annual fixture.

4. Amplify underrepresented voices

One World Media is committed to championing diversity in international reporting. Across all our work we support underrepresented groups (minority communities, ethnic groups, women, LGBTQ+, or people with disabilities) and media organisations from the global south. Whether it is the selection of our Fellows, or the judges of our Awards, or the speakers at our events, diversity and representation is always a consideration.

“I don't think I've ever attended a forum where there was so much diversity, not just in the projects that were presented but also in the filmmakers themselves and their background, geographically, culturally, religiously, and also in their style of storytelling” - Shin Yasuda, NHK, GSDF 2020 platform

Programme Goals 2021 - 2024:

- Increase recognition of diversity and representation in international reporting. We want to increase representation in all elements of our programme, from judges and speakers, to Fellows and shortlists, at least:
 - 30% will be minorities communities and underrepresented ethnic groups in the UK
 - 40% will be talent from the global south
 - 50% will be women.

5. Raise our profile and connect our global network of filmmakers and journalists

One World Media has an international profile and is increasingly recognised for our programmes supporting new talent as well as the long-running flagship OWM Awards. We have a strong network of ambassadors - like-minded filmmakers, journalists, media organisations and NGOs - that help us to spread the word about our activities. We believe that by continuing to raise our profile internationally and building deeper engagements with our existing partners, we can improve the outcomes for our whole network.

Programme Goals 2021 - 2024:

- Grow our global audience across all channels, with balanced representation across the regions we operate in.
- Increase brand awareness, in particular to be recognised for supporting new talent
- Achieve deeper engagement with our network, reflected in increased applications and connections to our programmes.